

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY VALLETTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7482

INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO

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TAGS: PINT, PFOR, MT, US, EG

SUBJECT: MINTOFF ANNOUNCES ESTABLISHMENT OF MALTA BRANCH
OF AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF CAIRO

REF: VALLETTA 0583, VALLETTA 0262, CAIRO 3344,

1. PRIME MINISTER MINTOFF ANNOUNCED IN PARLIAMENT ON JUNE 29 THAT THE GOM HAD REACHED AGREEMENT WITH THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF CAIRO FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT IN MALTA OF A TRAINING BRANCH OF AUC FOR EMPLOYEES OF OIL COMPANIES OPERATING IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AND MIDDLE EAST. COURSES TO BE TAUGHT WILL INCLUDE BUSINESS MANAGEMENT, ACCOUNTANCY AND OTHER SUBJECTS CONNECTED WITH THE OIL INDUSTRY.

2. MINTOFF STATED THAT THE GOM AND AUC HAD REACHED A TWO-YEAR AGREEMENT WHICH INVOLVED THE LEASE BY AUC OF A VACANT GOVERNMENT SCHOOL FOR 8,000 MALTESE POUNDS PER YEAR, PLUS A TEACHING LICENSE COSTING 6,772 MALTESE POUNDS THE FIRST YEAR AND "NOT LESS THAN" 3,386 MALTESE POUNDS IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SUBSEQUENT YEARS. THE AUC HAD ALSO AGREED TO RECRUIT ITS SUPPORTING STAFF IN MALTA, TO ADMIT MALTESE STUDENTS TO ITS TRAINING PROGRAMS, AND TO TRAIN MALTESE PERSONNEL SO THAT EVENTUALLY 50 PERCENT OF ITS TEACHING STAFF WOULD BE MALTESE. HE SAID THAT THE SCHOOL WOULD NOT PAY MALTESE INCOME TAX "IF GOVERNMENT IS SATISFIED THAT IT IS A NON-PROFIT-MAKING INSTITUTION."

3. MAINTOFF ADDED THAT THE AUC MALTA BRANCH WILL BE CALLED THE "TRAINING UNIVERSITY OF THE MEDITERRANEAN." AT THE END OF ITS FIRST TWO YEARS OF OPERATION, THE GOM AND AUC WOULD REVIEW THE OPERATION TO "MEET THE GOVERNMENT'S WISH THAT THE SCHOOL EXPAND AND EVENTUALLY BECOME A FULL-FLEDGED UNIVERSITY." HE CONCLUDED BY SAYING THAT THE LONG AND "TOUGH" NEGOTIATIONS HAD BEEN HELD IN A "CORDIAL ATMOSPHERE, WHICH PROVED THAT THE MALTESE PEOPLE WANTED THE BEST RELATIONS POSSIBLE WITH THE AMERICAN PEOPLE."

4. DR. FENECH ADAMI, THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION NATIONALIST PARTY, WELCOMED THE AUC AGREEMENT, ADDING THAT HE WAS PLEASED IT WAS ON LEASE TERMS, AS THIS MEANT THE SCHOOL WOULD REMAIN MALTESE PROPERTY. (COMMENT: THIS WAS AN INDIRECT CRITICISM OF AN EARLIER MINTOFF AGREEMENT TO SELL ANOTHER VACANT MALTESE SCHOOL TO THE LIBYAN GOVERNMENT FOR USE AS A TECHNICAL COLLEGE, WHICH THE NATIONALISTS HAD OPPOSED IN PARLIAMENT. END COMMENT).

5. IN CONLUSION, MINTOFF WISHED THE AUC PROJECT SUCCESS, AND A PARLIAMENTARY RESOLUTION WAS CARRIED WITHOUT OPPOSITION APPROVING THE GOM-AUC AGREEMENT.

6. COMMENT: THE EMBASSY IS ALSO PLEASED THAT THE LENGTHY AND ARDUOUS NEGOTIATIONS HAVE FINALLY SUCCEEDED, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AS THIS IS THE KIND OF ADDITIONAL AMERICAN PRESENCE IN MALTA WHICH WE WELCOME. AS USUAL WITH MINTOFF'S PARLIAMENTARY STATEMENTS, HE GLOSSED OVER THE HARD BARGAINING WHICH LED TO THE FINAL AGREEMENT, INCLUDING HIS EARLIER DEMAND THAT THE AUC CREATE AN "INSTANT" UNIVERSITY IN MALTA, RATHER THAN A TRAINING SCHOOL. WE HOPE THAT AUC IS SATISFIED WITH THE FINAL RESULT, AND WE ALSO WISH THEM WELL. LAINGEN

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